

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have utilised the priceless idols of Lord Buddha presented by the tourists from Taiwan and Thailand for placing it in Sankisa;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether there is any scheme to develop Sankisa as a tourist place; and

(f) if so, the time by which the said scheme is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) and (b) Making the lodging arrangement for tourists is primarily the responsibility of the State/Union Territory. However, the Deptt. of Tourism provide funds for construction of tourist complexes, wayside amenities, tourist reception centres etc. to the State Govts. based on the merits of the project *inter-se* priority and availability of funds. The Govt. of Uttar Pradesh has not submitted any proposal to the Deptt. of Tourism for construction of tourist facilities at Sankisa.

(c) and (d) According to the information received from the State Government of Uttar Pradesh, the idols of Lord Buddha are in the safe custody of the State Government.

(e) and (f) For the integrated development of Buddhist circuit in Uttar Pradesh the Department of Tourism has identified a circuit which includes Sankisa.

ISD Call Charges

3059. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to reduce International Subscribers Dial (ISD) call charges during holidays;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether foreign telecom companies have also offered concessional ISD calls; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Foreign telecom companies cannot offer outgoing ISD calls at present as VSNL is the monopoly service provider of basic International telecommunication services.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

[Translation]

Flights at Mridgulla Airport, Surat

3060. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state the efforts made by the Government for the development and revival of the operation of the flights at Mridgulla Airport, Surat by handing it over to the private sector?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : Surat airport can sustain operation of 30-seater aircraft. Since it belongs to the State Government of Gujarat, it is upto them to hand it over to the private sector for development. Airlines are free to operate on any route in their commercial judgement.

[English]

Gauge Conversion

3061. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL :
SHRI DINSHA PATEL :
SHRI VIJAY PATEL :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the gauge conversion work of Ahmedabad-Delhi railway is likely to be completed as per schedule;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any proposal for electrification of Ahmedabad-Delhi line is under consideration of the Government;

(d) if so, the time by which the above line is likely to be electrified;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor;

(f) whether the said line is proposed to be connected with Gandhinagar to facilitate the commuters of the State capital;

(g) if so, the details thereof;

(h) whether there is any proposal to introduce Rajdhani Express train on Ahmedabad-Delhi route after its conversion into broad gauge; and

(i) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The work has already been completed and the line would be commissioned before the target of 31.03.97.